

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Dr. Marsha Davis and I am chair of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department at Eastern Connecticut State University. I am here to testify regarding Transform CSCU 2020.

Governor's Bill 30, *An Act Concerning the Board of Regents for Higher Education Infrastructure Act* proposes increasing enrollments in the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities in order to prepare the future Connecticut workforce, and we certainly would support that goal. In addition it includes a one-time revenue transfer of \$60 million for the creation of a "President's Office Operating Fund" and proposes to increase capital funding by \$60 million for IT/smart classroom technology and the creation of a system-wide plan. Having up-to-date classroom technology is important. However, we believe it is necessary to maintain through separate funding the Community Colleges, Charter Oak, and Connecticut State Universities as distinct systems, with distinct missions and identities.

Let me illustrate this with a story of one of Eastern's mathematics majors. James, a first generation college student, first attended Three Rivers Community College and then transferred to Eastern. After arriving at Eastern, fear set in and James contemplated dropping out. Eastern seemed too large compared to Three Rivers. In addition, James struggled to balance school and family life. As is the case with many first generation students, his family did not always understand his commitment to higher education. James also struggled financially to make it through college. Fortunately for James, a part-time English professor at Eastern who had been his instructor at Three Rivers, took him under her wing. As he settled into a mathematics major, a mathematics professor stepped in as a mentor and began to cultivate James' scholarly pursuit of mathematics. James discovered that he had a passion for teaching and now tutors at the Mathematics Achievement Center. He will graduate from Eastern this spring and is applying to graduate school.

I tell this story for several reasons. First, in order to be successful, James needed the environment that Three Rivers offered before he was ready for Eastern. This speaks to the need for maintaining the Community Colleges and Connecticut State Universities as distinct systems. Second, as a first generation college student, he needed support to help him make his way through Three Rivers and Eastern. Small class size enabled James' instructors to know him as an individual and to assess his needs. While we applaud increasing the enrollment at the Connecticut State Universities by recruiting students with some college credit, like James, to complete their degrees, the proposed plan does not provide funding for the additional faculty needed to work with the larger student population, a student population with increased needs.

In conclusion, I urge you to maintain the Community Colleges, Charter Oak, and Connecticut State Universities as distinct systems, increase the funding for full-time faculty, and reverse the current trend of shifting a higher percentage of the financial burden from the state to the students.